



OMNIBUS BOOKS

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Teachers' Notes

88 Lime Street The Way In

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Introduction

Moving to a new house and school is always difficult, but for Ellen it is even more of a challenge than she had expected. The large rambling house with its overgrown garden is an intriguing place to live, but the kids at school are convinced it is haunted - and Ellen is not so sure that they are wrong. Strange things happen in the garden, there is a tower with no door into it that anyone can find, and Ellen's new classmates are downright nasty about the fact that she lives there. So when Ellen discovers what appears to be an old floor plan of the house, complete with mysterious markings on it that only she can see, she is determined to solve the puzzle of 88 Lime Street. But solving one puzzle leads to the next, and Ellen finds herself at the start of an exciting adventure she could have never imagined. Filled with tension and excitement, *88 Lime Street: The Way In* is an adventure story where the answers to each problem are never quite what they seem at first.

About the Author

Denise Kirby is the author of YA titles *Body on the Rocks* and *The Black Night*. She has had leading roles with major Australian theatre companies – from Shakespeare to *Little Shop of Horrors* – and has narrated audio books including the Australian classic *Snugglypot and Cuddlepie*. She has also appeared in television series such as *Neighbours*, *Home and Away*, *All Saints*, *Water Rats* and *Police Rescue* and in the feature films *Blackrock* and *Charlotte's Web*. Denise lives in Sydney with her husband, her musical daughter and the family cat, Poppy.

Activities

English

At the beginning of any story when an author introduces information that is important to the story they are said to be setting the scene. Setting the scene can include information about the characters, their interactions with each other, and also the physical location where the action will take place. In *88 Lime Street: The Way In*, the house where Ellen and her family live is central to the plot of the entire novel. As such, the first impressions that the reader gets of the house, and their understanding of what it looks like and the features it has, are vital to the story as a whole.

- 1) As a class, read the first chapter of *88 Lime Street: The Way In*, and discuss your impressions of the house.

- 2) Consider how the description makes you feel about the house – what the emotional impact of it is.
- 3) Compare the description of the house to the cover illustration. Do you think the cover illustration accurately reflects the mental image that the author was trying to convey? Why/why not?
- 4) Look at the language used to describe the house and its various parts. Some of the words and phrases used are:
 - unusual - sprang
 - enormous - bits jutting out everywhere
 - ramshackle - wandered
 - meandering - grown
 - whimsical - stood sentry.

As a class, or individually, identify any other words or phrases that the author has used to describe the house. Discuss the impression that these words give the reader, and how the language chosen contributes to the mental image you have formed of the house.

- 5) Individually, or as a class, make a list of as many other words and phrases as you can that you think would accurately help describe the house.
- 6) In the first chapter the author mentions three words that are commonly used to describe large houses. What are these three words? Why might the author have mentioned them but not used them to describe 88 Lime Street? Compare the impressions and mental images that these words give you to the one that the author has given of the house.
- 7) Real estate agents are a group of people who choose their words very carefully when describing houses and apartments. Investigate the sort of language that you can find in descriptions of houses for sale or rent. You can look at online advertisements or in your local newspaper.
 - Identify a dozen different adjectives and verbs that are used to describe the real estate for sale/rent.
 - Write a pair of advertisements for your own home. Have one that makes it seem as attractive as possible, while the other makes it seem undesirable. Look at the different ways you can convey the same information while leaving a different impression with the reader. For example, a small room could be described as either 'cramped and awkward' or 'cosy and compact'.
 - Write a pair of descriptions for the house at 88 Lime Street. For the first, use language similar to that used by the author in the first chapter of the story (you may want to refer to the list in section 4 above), and for the second use the sort of language that you have found in the real-life real-estate advertisements, trying to make the house seem as attractive as possible. Compare your two descriptions. Which sounds more like a house you would like to live in? Why?

8) As a class, create a timeline of the story showing the main events in sequence. Above your timeline plot the tension levels on a line graph. As a class discuss how the tension levels change over the course of the story, and talk about which part you think has the highest tension levels and why. List the different complications that the author introduces into the story. Label each tension point (peak in the line graph) with the main emotions that Ellen is feeling at that point (e.g. scared, lonely, confused, angry). Create a wall display featuring this timeline and graph for your classroom, and individually choose one point to illustrate, and add the individual illustrations to your display.

Creative Activities

9) Imagine an old, rambling, and quirky house of your own. Draw a floor plan of your imaginary house. Think of symbols you can use to indicate doors and windows, and how you can show if it has multiple storeys. Include a key to explain the symbols that you have used. Frame your floor plan with a border of geometric shapes, and draw a picture of your house to accompany your design.

10) Ellen finds it hard to explain the various everyday things in her life to the children from the past. She struggles to describe email and plastic in terms that they can understand. Write a short story involving time travel where you give a tour of your classroom to someone from the past. Pay close attention to all the things that are the same as well as those that are different!

11) The messages on the mirror and the messages on the emails are shown in two different fonts. One is meant to be scary, and the other mysterious but friendly. Invent a font of your own that reflects an emotion or feeling and the type of message you might write using it. Create an artwork based around your font. Some suggestions for things your font could convey are: scary, friendly, happy, angry, spooky, lonely, rushed, contemplative – or anything else you might think of. Remember to include colour in your artwork and design.

12) Create a crossword puzzle where the questions are all based around the story and characters.

13) The children broke down the string of Roman numerals on the wall into six separate numbers. What other possible ways could the string have been interpreted? Write a long string of Roman numerals of your own and see how many different ways you can decode it.

14) The fountain and pool in the story feature a globe that represents the Earth. Design a fountain and pool that you would like to have in your garden. Paint a picture of your fountain and write a paragraph or two describing its features and why you decided to include them.

15) Write a story featuring a time traveller or ghost visiting your home.

16) At the start of each chapter is a picture of what looks like a clock face with only one hand. Before reading the story hypothesise as to what this picture represents. After reading it, discuss your hypothesis with the class. What do you think it represents now? Design an alternative artwork that could be used at the start of each chapter. Remember to include elements that represent Time, the hidden tower room, and other key features in the story.

17) The key to the hidden door turned out to be geometric shapes that were parts of larger objects. Create a similar key of your own using shapes that you can find in objects in your classroom. Try to be creative in how you see different two-dimensional shapes within three-dimensional objects – for example you might have a triangle shape that represents the sharpened part of a pencil laid flat, rather than using a circle for the pencil end.

18) The clue Edward had to solve to enter the tower room involved Egyptian hieroglyphs. Research hieroglyphs – what they are and who used them, and invent some of your own.

19) There are lines from famous poems that talk about time on the walls of the tower room.

- Find a copy of one of the poems that is mentioned and read it. Share your impressions of the poem and what it means with the class.
- Find a poem that isn't mentioned in the novel that features time in its verses. Share the poem with the class and discuss how it talks about time. Is time looked on as a journey? Or maybe as a person?
- Discuss other ways that you have heard of time being represented in poetry and literature (e.g. Father Time, time flies when you're having fun, the mists of time).
- Write a poem of your own with time as a key concept. Illustrate your poem using watercolours and oil pastels. Try to reflect the mood of your poetry in the colour choices and line work of your illustration.

History and Technology

20) Ellen and her brother and sister find a collection of old games and books in one of the tower rooms. What games, books and toys did children play with and read 50 years ago? How about 100 years ago? Individually or in small groups choose a year (or decade) from the last century and research what toys and games were popular then. You can look in the library or online for this information. Make a poster showcasing the children's activities popular in your chosen year, and present it to your class.

21) Interview a parent, grandparent, or family friend about their childhood. What games did they play, what were their favourite books, and what do they remember of world events and happenings? Make a list of at least 10 questions you want to know the answers to before you interview them. Use the answers to your questions to write a piece in newspaper or magazine article format. Illustrate your article with old photos and pictures – you can either use ones that your interview subject provides, or search for images online or in the library.

22) In small groups choose a game that was popular in your grandparents' childhood, and play the game. It might be a board game like ludo or snakes and ladders, or you might want to try to make and use a spinning top or wooden hoop.

23) Find a picture of a school classroom from around 1919 either online or in a book from the library. Write about what you see, commenting on the differences as well as the similarities.

24) The six children in the story come from six different eras in Australian history. They are from 1842, 1878, 1919, 1933, 1969, and 2014. Individually or in pairs, choose one of the years from the list and research that time in Australian history. Some things you might like to consider are: what was happening in Australia in that year? What major world events were occurring? What technology had been invented or was being used? How did people travel? What sorts of jobs did people have? What schooling was available to children, and how long did they stay at school? What was daily life like for people in the cities and in the countryside? How did people communicate with each other? Write up your findings on A4 paper and include illustrations of places, events, and objects. Collate everyone's research results to form a class booklet.

Health

Ellen receives emails that are intended to scare her. Sending nasty messages to someone over email, social media, or by text is called cyber-bullying, and is a problem that a lot of children and teenagers have to deal with today. As a class discuss cyber-bullying. Some points to consider are:

- What is cyber-bullying?
- Why do people send nasty messages like this?
- Ellen chose to hide the messages and then confront her bully directly. Do you think that this is the best way to handle something like this?
- What could have gone wrong with Ellen's solution?
- What are some other ways that Ellen could have dealt with this?
- How can we protect ourselves from cyber-bullying?
- If a friend or classmate is being bullied, what sorts of things should we do to help them?

NOTE: The Australian Government's Department of Education and Training has a list of resources dealing with bullying, online safety, and cyberbullying at <https://education.gov.au/cybersafety-schools>

The resources linked at this webpage are appropriate for a range of student ages and issues, and it would be valuable for teachers to consider exploring and using some of them when looking at this topic with students.